



mgsmith@amergenenergy.com on 10/11/2001 12:22:25 PM

RECEIVED

To: ymp\_sr@ymp.gov  
cc:

OCT 11 2001

Subject: Yucca Mountain Repository

Part of Records Package / Supplement / Correction

To whom it may concern,

I strongly urge you to recommend acceptance of the Yucca Mountain site to President Bush as a permanent repository for high level wastes.

As long as we are able to show that the repository will protect people from DIRECT exposure to a spent-fuel element, storing high level waste in this way is actually safer than leaving the raw uranium in the ground, never to be used in a power reactor. (The extremely low "all pathways" annual dose limit of 15mrem accomplishes this with a substantial safety margin.)

Only about 20% of the fission products from the fuel burned in the reactor are still radioactive when put in the ground. They will each produce about 5 MeV of energy during their decay to stability (as opposed to over 50 MeV for the uranium.) They produce radiation (beta-gamma) which is easily shielded by the earth. The only plausible risk is internal contamination. For internal contamination, the alpha particles produced by the raw uranium are far more dangerous.

Furthermore, for any time period after about 1000 years, the spent fuel is actually LESS radioactive than the raw uranium in the ground.

Our choice are thus as follows: We can choose to leave uranium buried all over the country, with absolutely no engineering controls preventing exposure, which gives off dangerous alpha radiation of high energy level, OR we can choose to mine and productively use at least some of that uranium and then bury the waste in a strictly controlled and sturdy engineered containment environment a lower energy isotope, which will decay to stability sooner and produces a radiation form less harmful, even if it were to be ingested.

The choice seems clear. We need a high level repository and this repository actually represents a REDUCTION in risk to the public compared to leaving the uranium in the ground, unmined and unused. Recommend approval of the Yucca Mountain site.

Sincerely,

Matthew G. Smith  
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2